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Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, in response to a resolution of the House of Representatives, transmitting estimates of pensions for Mexican War and certain Indian wars

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ESTIMATED COST OF PENSIONS FOR MEXICAN AND IN-
DIAN WARS.

LETTER

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

IN RESPONSE TO

A resolution of the House of Representatives, transmitting estimates of pensions for Mexican war and certain Indian wars.

MARCH 27, 1882.—Referred to the Committee on Pensions and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, March 23, 1882.

SIR: In reply to a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed on the 10th instant, requesting "the Secretary of the Interior to prepare and have printed for the use of the House an estimate of the supposed cost of allowing pensions to all the present survivors and the widows of those who may have deceased of the Mexican war, and also of the Indian wars prior to 1846, with the supposed number of such survivors and widows; also an estimate of the cost of such pensions limited to such survivors as shall have attained the age of sixty-five, and such additional information in the premises as he may think useful," I have the honor to inclose herewith a letter from the Commissioner of Pensions, giving the estimates requested and setting forth the grounds upon which the estimates are based. Referring to the request that the estimates be printed by this department, I would state that the paper cannot be printed by this department as an executive document, and that it is a matter of doubt whether the appropriation for printing for the Department of the Interior can properly be used for printing for the use of Congress.

Very respectfully,

S. J. KIRKWOOD,
Secretary.

The SPEAKER
of the House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
PENSION OFFICE,
Washington, D. C., March 21, 1882.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of House resolution dated March 10, 1882, requesting the Secretary of the Interior—

To prepare, and have printed for the use of the House, an estimate of the supposed cost of allowing pensions to all the present survivors and the widows of those who

may have deceased of the Mexican war, and also of the Indian wars prior to 1846, with the supposed number of such survivors and widows; also an estimate of the cost of such pensions limited to such survivors as shall have attained the age of sixty-five, and such additional information in the premises as he may think useful—and in reply to said resolution to submit the following report:

MEXICAN WAR.

In a former report made by me on this subject it was stated, as a basis of calculation, that at the close of the war with Mexico there survived 66,087 soldiers who had received an honorable discharge from the service. These figures mainly were taken from a report made by the Adjutant-General of the Army, and were published in Executive Document No. 24, House of Representatives, first session Thirty-first Congress. In reaching this estimate, the naval force employed was estimated at 5,000, and the number who re-enlisted was given as 13,221, these figures having been given some years ago by the National Association of Mexican War Veterans.

The aggregate force employed in that war was 105,454.

Taking the 66,087 who were supposed to survive that war as the minimum, the following Table No. 1 will show the number who survive at each age, commencing with sixty-five:

TABLE No. 1.

Age.	Survivors.	Widows.	Total.	Total cost to survivors.	Total cost to survivors and widows.
65	34,234	14,851	49,085	\$3,286,464	\$4,712,160
66	32,780	14,869	47,649	3,146,880	4,574,304
67	31,892	14,833	46,725	3,013,632	4,437,600
68	30,004	14,744	44,748	2,880,384	4,295,808
69	28,616	14,603	43,219	2,747,136	4,149,024
70	27,228	14,410	41,638	2,613,888	3,997,248
71	25,841	14,163	40,004	2,480,736	3,840,384
72	24,321	13,834	38,155	2,334,816	3,662,880
73	22,668	13,404	36,072	2,176,128	3,482,812
74	21,545	13,069	34,614	2,063,320	3,322,944
75	19,034	12,197	31,231	1,827,264	2,998,176
76	17,183	11,444	28,627	1,649,568	2,748,192
77	15,399	10,630	26,029	1,478,304	2,498,784
78	13,747	9,799	23,546	1,319,712	2,260,416
79	12,293	9,006	21,299	1,180,128	2,044,704
80	10,839	8,155	18,994	1,040,544	1,823,424
81	9,517	7,332	16,849	913,632	1,617,504
82	8,261	6,506	14,767	793,056	1,417,632
83	7,072	5,684	12,756	678,912	1,224,576
84	6,014	4,921	10,935	577,844	1,049,760
85	5,089	4,128	9,317	488,544	894,432
86	4,064	3,517	7,581	390,144	727,776
87	3,371	2,879	6,250	323,616	600,000
88	2,644	2,284	5,028	253,824	482,688
89	2,115	1,843	3,958	203,040	379,968
90	1,653	1,450	3,103	158,688	297,888
91	1,190	1,052	2,242	114,240	215,232
92	860	764	1,624	82,560	155,904
93	661	589	1,250	63,456	120,000
94	463	414	877	44,448	84,192
95	397	355	752	38,112	72,192
96	265	237	502	25,440	48,192
97	232	208	440	22,272	42,240
98	199	178	377	19,104	36,192
99	177	159	336	16,992	28,416
100	155	98	253	14,880	24,288
101	133	78	211	12,768	20,256
102	67	60	127	6,432	12,192
				40,485,408	65,380,480

TABLE No. 2.

Number of surviving soldiers and the widows of those who served in the war with Mexico, at the age of 65 years, with the cost of pension at the rate of \$96 per annum for each class; also the number who would probably survive at each age after becoming 65 years old, and the cost of pension for each age, computed on the basis of 76,382, who survived at the close of that war, at an average age of 26 years.

To estimate the number of widows who survive must be largely conjectured, but as affording information on the subject I have assumed that 90 per cent. of those who left the service, and afterwards deceased, were married, and applied the same ratio of deaths to the widows as in the case of the survivors.

Other official records, since examined, show a larger number in that war than was first reported, principally in the Regular Army, which, with the estimated 5,000 in the Navy, would bring the aggregate force employed up to 110,966, instead of 105,454, as before reported.

The re-enlistment reported is also believed to be higher than proper. There were 29,098 volunteers who had a term of service one year and less, and it is believed that an estimate of one-third for re-enlistments would be the maximum, and this, added to the 524 who re-enlisted in the Regular Army, and the 3,830 who had been pensioned, and the deaths and desertions before reported, would leave as a basis for computation 76,382 who survived at the close of the war, instead of 66,087, as before reported.

The following table shows the number who would survive at the ages before mentioned, or the higher number, and will, it is believed, represent a maximum.

This latter estimate has been subject to such test as the allowances of bounty land warrants for service in that war would permit.

The same rule in reaching the number of surviving widows is used as in the first table.

Age.	Survivors.	Widows.	Total.	Total cost to survivors.	Total cost to survivors and widows.
65	39,540	17,152	56,692	\$3,795,840	\$5,442,432
66	37,860	17,173	55,033	3,634,560	5,283,168
67	36,257	17,132	53,389	3,480,672	5,125,344
68	34,654	17,029	51,683	3,326,784	4,961,568
69	33,051	16,866	49,917	3,172,896	4,792,032
70	31,448	16,643	48,091	3,019,008	4,616,736
71	29,846	16,358	46,204	2,865,216	4,435,584
72	28,090	15,978	44,068	2,696,640	4,230,528
73	26,181	15,481	41,662	2,513,376	3,999,552
74	24,884	15,094	39,978	2,388,864	3,837,888
75	21,984	14,087	36,071	2,118,464	3,462,816
76	19,845	13,217	33,062	1,905,120	3,173,952
77	17,785	12,277	30,062	1,707,360	2,885,952
78	15,877	11,317	27,194	1,524,192	2,610,624
79	14,198	10,401	24,599	1,363,008	2,361,504
80	12,519	9,419	21,938	1,201,824	2,106,048
81	10,992	8,468	19,460	1,055,232	1,868,160
82	9,541	7,514	17,055	915,936	1,637,280
83	8,168	6,565	14,733	784,128	1,414,368
84	6,946	5,683	12,629	666,816	1,212,384
85	5,877	4,883	10,760	564,192	1,032,960
86	4,693	4,062	8,755	450,528	840,480
87	3,893	3,325	7,218	373,728	692,928
88	3,053	2,638	5,691	293,088	546,336
89	2,442	2,128	4,570	234,432	438,720
90	1,909	1,674	3,583	183,264	343,968

TABLE No. 2—Continued.

Age.	Survivors.	Widows.	Total.	Total cost to survivors.	Total cost to survivors and widows.
91	1,374	1,215	2,589	\$181,904	\$248,544
92	993	882	1,875	95,328	180,000
93	763	680	1,443	73,248	138,528
94	534	478	1,012	51,264	97,152
95	458	410	868	43,968	83,328
96	305	273	578	29,280	55,488
97	265	240	505	25,440	48,480
98	229	205	434	21,984	41,664
99	204	137	341	19,584	32,736
100	179	113	292	17,184	28,032
101	153	90	243	14,688	23,328
102	77	69	146	7,392	14,016
				46,758,432	74,844,608

It has been the experience of the office that perhaps 16 per cent. of those who may be entitled to a pension fail to apply, or, having applied, fail to become pensioners for one reason or another. No deductions have been made on this account. It is true, I believe, that in the two years following the Mexican war the number of desertions from the Regular Army was unusually large, especially among those troops in the far West and on the Pacific, induced largely by the gold discovery in California.

These desertions would come largely from those who served in Mexico, probably, and would, it is supposed, exclude them from the benefits of a pension. No deductions have been made on account of these desertions.

During the late rebellion the average age of these soldiers would have been from 40 to 45, and many doubtless served in both armies, subject to the casualties of service, some by deaths and others who would become pensioners for disability, lessening the numbers who would come in now for a service pension.

I have no data on which to form any estimate of these numbers, so have made no deduction on their account.

INDIAN WARS.

The following are the Indian wars prior to 1846, the years in which the same were fought, the force employed, and the present average age of the survivors:

Seminole war in 1818: force employed, 5,911; and the present average age of the survivors is 90 years.

Black Hawk war in 1832: force employed, 5,031; and the present average age of the survivors is 76 years.

Creek war in 1837: force employed, 13,418; and the present average age of the survivors is 71 years.

The Cherokee war in 1837: force employed, 3,926; and the present average age of the survivors is 71 years.

The Florida war in 1839: force employed, 41,122; and the present average age of the survivors is 69 years.

The New York frontier disturbance in 1839: force employed, 1,128; and the present average age of the survivors is 69 years.

In the Cherokee war and the New York frontier disturbance it is believed no casualties occurred, and assuming that 15 per cent. of the

force employed in the other Indian wars were killed, deserted, wounded, and afterwards became pensioners and would not become pensioners on account of service, there would have remained, in the aggregate, at the close of each war, 60,503 as a basis for calculation.

Assuming that the present average age of the survivors is 73 years, the following table will show the number for each succeeding age, and the cost for each:

TABLE No. 3.

Age.	Survivors.	Widows.	Total number survivors and widows.	Total cost to survivors.	Total cost to survivors and widows.
73.....	20,826	12,315	33,141	\$1,999,296	\$3,181,536
74.....	19,793	12,007	31,800	1,900,128	3,052,800
75.....	17,487	11,206	28,693	1,678,752	2,754,528
76.....	15,787	10,514	26,301	1,515,552	2,524,896
77.....	14,147	9,756	23,903	1,358,112	2,294,688
78.....	12,629	8,973	21,602	1,212,384	2,073,792
79.....	11,294	8,274	19,568	1,084,224	1,878,528
80.....	9,958	7,493	17,451	955,968	1,675,296
81.....	8,744	6,736	15,480	839,424	1,486,080
82.....	7,590	5,967	13,557	728,640	1,301,472
83.....	6,497	5,222	11,719	623,712	1,125,024
84.....	5,526	4,521	10,047	530,496	964,512
85.....	4,776	3,884	8,660	458,496	831,360
86.....	3,826	3,236	7,062	367,296	676,992
87.....	3,097	2,645	5,742	297,312	551,232
88.....	2,429	2,039	4,468	233,184	428,928
89.....	1,943	1,633	3,576	186,528	343,296
90.....	1,518	1,332	2,850	145,728	273,600
91.....	1,093	1,066	2,159	104,928	207,264
92.....	792	702	1,494	76,032	143,424
93.....	608	542	1,150	58,368	110,400
94.....	424	332	756	40,704	72,576
95.....	365	326	691	35,040	66,336
96.....	243	218	461	23,328	44,256
97.....	213	192	405	20,448	38,880
98.....	183	164	347	17,568	33,312
99.....	122	109	231	11,712	22,176
100.....	102	91	193	9,792	18,528
101.....	80	73	153	7,680	14,688
102.....	62	55	117	5,952	11,232
				16,526,784	28,201,632

The process used in the ascertainment of the number of surviving widows is the same as used in the two former tables.

The average age of the soldier is estimated as 26 years, it being the same as officially given of the soldiers who served in the war of 1861-'65.

I am persuaded, however, that the character of the Indian wars were such that it called into service more generally the more advanced ages, especially where the term of service was short, and the enlistments were in the vicinity of the Indian disturbance.

Very respectfully,

WM. W. DUDLEY,
Commissioner of Pensions.

Hon. SAMUEL J. KIRKWOOD,
Secretary of the Interior.

H. Ex. 137.—2